

# 310 Dispatch

Never again shall a veteran coming home from battle be made to feel alone and unappreciated!



*Together We Make  
A Difference*

*Charles S. Kettles  
Chapter 310*



**December 2023,  
Washtenaw County,  
Michigan**



**Editor's Note:** -- Speaking for the Dispatch Team, we are pleased to offer you the December 2023 310 Dispatch. This publication is also a historical record of the many things that our VVA 310 Chapter does from month to month. In his presidential message, Vance McCrumb has developing plans to include more of our Chapter members' stories and memories. If you haven't yet told your story, I invite you to give it some thought--and don't worry if your commas and word choices are not perfect. We have editors who can help. For now, Merry Christmas!  
-- Paulo Pereira, Editor

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## 2023 December President's Message

By Vance McCrumb



November 10th Bill Henderson, Al Merritt, Larry St. Antoine and I attended the yearly Veterans Day Celebration at Saline High School. There were only 6 veterans in attendance. It looked like it was set up for 24, based on the number of tables and chairs.

Fredo and I advised the young student who coordinate the event that we would help get more vets involved. She and her team put in a lot of effort to honor six veterans.

They had coffee, orange juice, rolls and water for our morning brunch, as well as pizza and cookies at noon when we were done talking to the students. In the past, we moved from classroom to classroom; but this year, we were divided into three teams of two each in the Media Room. The students were also in three groups, and they rotated between vet groups. Like our other school visits, we talked about our time in the service.

John Riling will attend our membership meeting on the 9th in which he discussed the future closing of the VVA. He did stress that Chapters can stay in place, as well as keeping the VVA name. Luker dives deeper into this topic in the meeting minutes, which can be viewed [online](#).

On Veterans Day, I was watching the 6pm News on Channel 2 out of Detroit. They ran a special segment honoring veterans at 6:30. It opened with a video aerial view of our Memorial. There was a caption; but, by the time I realized it, the opening segment continued.



November 21st we shopped at Meijer and delivered our 36th annual Thanksgiving Dinner for Dawn Farm. Tracy Puvalowski (pictured next to Fredo) from Dawn

Farm advised there will be 40 residents and 4 staff members there on Thanksgiving. Missing from the photo is Bryan (Too Tall) Bayha.

Something I'm hoping to do several times a year, especially for those not included in the book *We Answered The Call*, is to include your story, regardless of where you served, on our website, as well as *Readers Digest* version in one of our monthly newsletters. If you would like to share your story, please email me. I have two stories from members in the oven for next year, so please give it some thought.

That being said, Paulo and I agree that the newsletter will have to make some changes based on the above paragraph to make room for additional articles and article length within the 12 pages we publish. Paulo asked my thoughts about reducing the length of the KIA bios, and we both agree that we can reduce the length and still give the proper respect due our Washtenaw County KIAs. For those who receive the newsletter via email, you will be able to click on the KIA picture to jump to our website and read the full story. So, look forward to some changes next year.

Arf,

V

P.S. You cannot unsay a cruel word.

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## December 2023 Chaplain's Corner

By Rev. Gordon Moore

On the first Christmas, the shepherds heard the heavenly message of "peace on earth, good will towards men, with whom God is well pleased." That phrase has intrigued me for years because I wonder to whom the blessing is extended. Is it for the whole earth and all mankind speaking of a future time? Or is the blessing limited in scope to only the people with whom God is well pleased?

I think it is a relevant question, considering the current world situation with so much lack of peace, particularly as we enter into the Christmas season and the hope of a New Year being different.

Because it was directed to shepherds abiding in the field at the advent of the Christ child nearby, it would seem limited in scope. Yet, God had sent promises

through his servants the prophets considering the coming Prince of Peace, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who would establish a kingdom where he would rule and put down any insurrection and crime with immediate judgment. We know this part is still future tense.

So, what would the original recipients of the message of peace have understood regarding the extent of the blessing? And what part do we play in the continuation of the message of peace, for Jesus commanded his followers to go throughout the world and enter homes with a message of peace, and, if it is not accepted, to leave, brush off the dust from the feet, and move on to the next location to issue the blessing of peace.

There is a lot to ponder because we are still actively involved with the proclamation of the Peace message, of which we carry the torch.

May your Christmas be filled with the hope of peace, the promise of the Savior's return to usher in his kingdom, and good health and time spent with family and friends.

Peace be upon you.

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## VVA 310 Chapter Meeting Minutes

By Jon Luker, Secretary

**Vietnam Veterans of America**  
**Charles S. Kettles Chapter 310**  
**Regular Membership Meeting Minutes**  
**9 November 2023**

**Call to Order** by President McCrumb at 1857 hrs.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Opening Prayer:** Tim Driscoll

**Moment of Silence** for POW/MIA'S, their families and those who are serving in hazardous places around the world.

**Roll Call:** A quorum was established. Welcome Home Everyone!

**New Members:** None

**Guests:** John Riling, Region 5 Director and Michigan State Council President, Gary Estermyer, Michigan State Council Secretary and Michigan State Council Benefits Director.

**Convention Briefing** and Q and A with John Riling:

Although the headquarters team was ready to implement the eight-year shutdown sequence proposed at the 2019 convention, the convention delegates were not willing to name the date by which the National organization would wind up its affairs. Some national responsibilities are being slowly handed off to Veterans Voices of America. They will be taking on more of the claims that go to the US Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims and more of the initial claims as well, but only when the involved veteran approves of that change.

Speaking of claims, the Michigan State Council's Veterans Services Team is now rated as the second most effective claims program in the country, not only based on the total awards it has produced for veterans, but also because it produces those awards at a lower cost per dollar awarded than the other veteran organizations.

Because State Councils and many Chapters are doing important work that will need to be continued even after National is finished, the national convention determined that both State Councils and Chapters will be allowed to continue to operate their organizations in perpetuity as authorized by their state-issued incorporation documents. They will also be allowed to continue to use the VVA name and other intellectual property like the VVA logo. It is unclear whether the IRS will continue to treat Councils and Chapters as tax exempt organizations. There may or may not be a reapplication process required.

Once National is gone, Chapters will not be compelled to be part of the State Council. Some Chapters and even some State Councils will dissolve, but we hope most will find a way to carry on. We expect most Chapters will choose to continue the work of the State Councils. There are discussions about the State Councils within Region Five forming a regional coalition of some sort.

There are many things that National does that it will be difficult or impossible for Chapters or Councils to do instead. These include, suing the VA for failure to implement or obey the law, lobbying Congress, advocating nationwide healthcare policy changes such as Agent Orange and other toxic exposures, military sexual assault policy, women's healthcare policy and so forth. There is some movement at National to help make sure somebody picks up these important

duties. As stated, some litigation work is being transferred from National to Veterans Voices of America. Thanks to recent donations from Sandie Wilson and to a bequeath from somebody else, Birthdefects.org is now in a much better position to handle toxic exposure issues at the National level. Nevertheless, Chapters and Councils need to define their own roles going forward.

As you recall, VVA did stand up a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization called Local Veterans Alliance that was dissolved due to a lack of interest by non-Vietnam Era veterans. The way things stand now, it is not necessary for VVA310 to stand down nor to stand up a new organization. VVA 310 does need a new strategic plan.

**Motion:** by Feight/Wilson to approve the October Minutes published in the Dispatch. Approved.

**President's Report:**

Please see my remarks in the Dispatch.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Reports were emailed to the Board and to members who wanted one. Let Bourne know your email address if you desire these reports. The significant nonrestricted revenues came from Merchandise sales at the VA and to Rep. Jimmie Wilson. The largest unrestricted expense was the cost of goods sold.

We had \$800 revenue for restricted funds. We sent \$5,000 to Fisher House Michigan for the Ann Arbor house and spent \$2,565 on underwear for VA patients.

**AVVA Report:** Please see the report in the Dispatch.

**Committee Reports**

**Merchandise:** No sales at the VA this month.

**Washtenaw County Council of Veterans:** The Council formed a committee to consider doing a dinner for local dignitaries, as has been done in the past. The Council is adjourned until February.

**Michigan State Council:** Estermyer. The 40th State Council Anniversary Dinner will be 2 December at 1900 at Baldo's Italian restaurant in Brownstown. The next meeting will be the day after at 1000 at Downriver Chapter 259 in Southfield. The Annual Meeting will be in June in Marquette.

**Memorial Maintenance:** We have moved summer equipment to the shed and winter equipment to

the new building. Nobody is authorized to use the new snow blower except the person who has been shoveling snow at the Memorial by hand for more than 20 years: Wendy Hibbitts. The irrigation system was blown out and leak tested. No problems detected. It will be leak tested again in Spring. The Memorial looks great! Thanks to the members of the Memorial Maintenance Team who put in long hours this summer. If you would like to join the team, please contact Al (Fredo) Merritt and let him know.

**Website:** We have had 2,881 hits this month for a total of 389,317 hits since inspection.

**Membership:** We lost three members: Harold W. Klenk, Dennis G. Newman and David L. Ney, bringing membership down to 213.

**Newsletter:** No report.

**Health Care:** Long ago, the VVA said it was taking care of female veterans as needed. Hogwash. Turns out they only treated one female veteran that year. Things have improved at the Ann Arbor VA a great deal since then. The VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System is now one of the best in the country.

**LTCCSKMC:** No report.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Good of the Order:**

**Merritt:** Breakfast on Friday (12/15/23) will be at 0900 at Brewed Awakenings, 7025 E Michigan Ave, Saline, MI 48176, (734) 316-2084.

**Driscoll:** Dave Draper is having health issues. AVVA member Cox had lung surgery and is doing well. Please keep them in your prayers.

**Merritt:** On behalf of myself and the Memorial Maintenance Committee, I would like to thank Vance McCrumb, Phil Clintworth, Roy and Bonnie Hall, Jane Kinzinger, Tim Driscoll, Chris Wetzler, Eric Downie, Wendy Hibbitts and Jon Luker for showing up for our Fall Cleanup of the Memorial. A lot of good work was accomplished.

**Kurtz:** Bob Bull will be at Texas Roadhouse on 11 November from 1100 to 1400. He will hand out vouchers and other gifts for veterans. The vouchers will be good for a free meal and will be good for Veterans Day and beyond.

**Rivers:** The Washtenaw County Honor Guard was given a flag that belonged to a recently interred

veteran. The flag shows a map of Vietnam surrounded by the unit patches of most of the units that had deployed to Vietnam in the early years. It is a hard to find vintage flag. On behalf of the Honor Guard, the flag was presented to the Michigan State Council Merchandise team to display at their sales events.

**McCrum**: Remember that this Veterans Day is also the 30th Anniversary of the Women Veterans Memorial. Do you remember being there that day?

**McCrum**: For those who are not going to breakfast, remember that Saline High School is having their Veterans event at 0800 tomorrow.

**Perrault**: Happy Birthday, United States Marines!

**Hall**: We will meet at the Saline Road Meijer store at 1600 on the 21st to buy groceries for the Dawn Farm annual Thanksgiving Dinner. We told Dawn Farm we will arrive there between 1800 and 1830. You are welcome to help.

**Throneberry**: Again, I want to thank VVA 310 for support of Veterans Radio. Thanks to your support, we received a matching fund check for \$10,000 from VVA National. I'd also like to thank the Bob Woodruff Foundation for their support and suggest you think of them as you seek funding to further your efforts to support veterans.

**Harrison**: We will meet on 21 November to do our annual grocery shopping for Dawn Farm annual Thanksgiving Dinner. A group of us will do the shopping and then deliver the food to Dawn Farm. If interested in helping, please let me know.

**Closing Prayer**: Tim Driscoll

**Flag Salute**

**Meeting Adjourned** at 2018 hrs

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## AVVA December Newsletter

By Kathy Driscoll

Our November meeting was a successful lunch meeting at Alpha Coney. Four members attended. Kate Melcher was our guest and we presented her the five Service Emblem blankets for Hospice. Tim Driscoll and Steve Hitte also attended our meeting.

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**Our next meeting at 6 pm on December 14th at the VFW Post 423. This will be our Christmas Meeting. Please bring a dish to pass.**

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**We will be collecting Toys 4 Tots at our December meeting. Please bring a toy to donate to Toys 4 Tots.**

Our members assisted VVA 310 members with the Packing Party.

Cindy Cox's operation was successful. She is recuperating at home. We sent Cindy a get-well card signed by our members at our November meeting.

We will be sponsoring three delegates to Girls' State 2024. Rilee London, a junior at Saline High School, is one of our delegates. Please let me know if you know a high school junior who would like to attend Girls' State. It will be in-person this year at Michigan State University, June 23 – 29, 2024.

### VISTA Report

Please email me your VISTA hours. I will need the hours for September and October. If you assisted our Chapter at the Memorial and VA Hospital visits, I need to report them to AVVA VISTA chairman.

### Membership Report:

AVVA 310 has 33 members. Tim Driscoll is our new Dual Member. All VVA 310 members are invited to join AVVA 310 as Dual Members. If you would like to join AVVA 310, please contact Kathy Driscoll. AVVA has changed their membership dues. There is no longer a 3-year membership.

[https://www.avva.org/forms/membership/new\\_memberapp\\_2022.pdf](https://www.avva.org/forms/membership/new_memberapp_2022.pdf)

1 Year \$20

Lifetime membership \$100

[There is a Lifetime Membership payment plan of \$25 down / \$25 monthly until paid in full.]

**VVA Dual membership \$50**

**Chapter Happenings!**

**AVVA Chapter 310 Fundraising Report**

- We have 40 donated Wrist Story Bracelets left. Suggested donation is \$5. When we sell out, we will donate an additional \$300 to Fisher House Michigan. Contact Kathy Driscoll if you



would like one. All proceeds will go to Fisher House Michigan.

### Service Projects

- Please consider donating food to your local community food banks. Our communities still have families who are food insecure due to economic circumstances.

Links to local Food Banks:

Saline Social Services:

<https://www.salinesocialservice.com/ways-to-give/donate/>

Food Gatherers of Ann Arbor:

<https://www.foodgatherers.org/?module=Page&slID=donate-funds>

SOS Community Services Ypsilanti, MI:

<https://soscs.org/ways-to-give/>

Catholic Social Services

<https://csswashtenaw.org/family-children/cssw-food-pantry/>

Google Search for Food Banks in Washtenaw County:

<https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=washtenaw+county+food+banks>

### Lois Perrault Memorial Fund – 2024 Girls’ State Update!

The fund balance is \$1,913.25. We sponsored three delegates to Girls’ State 2023. We sent the Saline American Legion Auxiliary Post 322 \$1275.

### AVVA National and AVVA Michigan State Association News

I attended the October 8th meeting in Cheboygan. Five Chapter delegates attended, with eight AVVA members total in attendance. All five Chapters participated in a round table discussion of how their Chapters serve their veteran community supporting their VVA members. It was great to hear how AVVA Michigan Association members serve their Veteran Communities. We have Chapters supporting their local Veteran hospitals, CBOTs, and nursing homes throughout Michigan.

I will be attending the AVVA Michigan Association meeting on December 3rd in Southgate.

### WCCV

Next meeting will be January 15th at the Saline American Legion.

### Next AVVA Meeting!

**Our January 2024 meeting will be a lunch meeting at Alpha Coney Restaurant, Jackson Rd, Ann Arbor. Our members who attend voted to have luncheon meetings. If you are available, please plan to attend our January 11th.**

**Keep up to date with our Chapter:** All AVVA and VVA 310 events are posted on our Chapter’s webpage, [vva310.org](http://vva310.org) in the VVA News Flash section on the right column of the homepage.

**AVVA Charles S. Kettles Chapter 310 proudly supports the AVVA Mission and Vision Statements.**

#### AVVA Mission Statement:

*To provide support to Veterans and their families through programs, projects, and education.*

#### AVVA Vision Statement:

*To Create a better everyday life for Veterans and their families.*

Kathy Driscoll

Chapter Representative, AVVA Chapter 310

Past President, AVVA Michigan Association

[dkathyr16@gmail.com](mailto:dkathyr16@gmail.com)

734-355-4897

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### Honoring December Anniversaries on the Wall



**Private First Class Donald George Bousley** was born on March 18, 1949 in Ann Arbor, Michigan to Mr. and Mrs. Ferris G. Bousley. Donald is a 1968 graduate of Ann Arbor High School.

Private First Class Bousley enlisted in the

Army in June of 1968. He began his tour of duty in Tay Ninh Province, South Vietnam on November 20, 1968 serving with C Company, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division as an infantryman. Donald was killed by enemy small arms fire during an ambush on December 22, 1968 just one month and two days after arriving In-Country. He was posthumously awarded two Bronze Star Medals, the Purple Heart, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Private First Class Donald George Bousley is survived by his parents and two brothers. He lived for 19 years, 9 months and 4 days. He is resting in Washtenong Memorial Park in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Don is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township. His name also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC on Panel 36W Line 063.

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**Private First Class Paul Quammen Etter** was born on January 12, 1946 to Mr. and Mrs. Lester F. Etter of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Paul is a graduate of University High School in Ann Arbor, Michigan where he lettered in football, swimming and track. He attended Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan where he

studied art for two years prior to entering the Marine Corps on April 16, 1968.

Private First Class Etter went through Marine Corps Boot Camp in San Diego, California. Paul began his tour of duty in Danang, Quang Nam Province, South Vietnam on October 2, 1968 serving as an Antitank Assaultman with C Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, III Marine Amphibious Forces. Paul was in combat continuously until he was hospitalized for a foot infection. He returned to duty on December 4, 1968. Paul was killed by small arms fire four days after returning to his unit on December 8, 1968 just two months and six days into his tour of duty In-Country.

Paul Quammen Etter is survived by his parents, two brothers and four sisters. He lived 22 years, 10 months and 26 days. He is resting in Bethlehem Cemetery located in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Paul's name

is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township under Ann Arbor. His name also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC on Panel 37W Line 063.

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**Sergeant Dannie Lewis Johnson** was born on September 28, 1946 to Mr. and Mrs. James W. Johnson of Ypsilanti, Michigan. Dannie is a December 1965 graduate of Willow Run High School in Ypsilanti, Michigan. He enlisted in the Army before graduation and worked at the Fisher Body Plant in Willow Run while he waited for induction into the Army.



Sergeant Johnson entered

the Army in 1965 and received his Basic Training in Fort Knox, Kentucky, and completed Paratrooper School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Dannie began his tour of duty in Nha Trang, Khanh Hoa Province, South Vietnam on September 5, 1966 serving as a Clerk-Typist with Headquarters Company, 5th Special Forces Group. He was killed on December 30, 1967, just a month into his second tour of duty in South Vietnam. He was killed when a mortar round exploded on his position as he was directing artillery support.

Dannie Lewis Johnson is survived by his parents, three brothers, and five sisters. He lived 21 years, 3 months and 2 days. He was posthumously promoted to Sergeant. He is resting in Aldridge Grove Cemetery in Hartzell in Lawrence County, Alabama. Dannie's name is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township under Ypsilanti. His name also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC on Panel 33E Line 003.

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**Sergeant First Class Grady Merrill Jordan** was born on July 25, 1915 in Benton, Arkansas. Sergeant Jordan enlisted in the United States Army on July 22, 1940 beginning a 26 year career in the Army. Grady served in World War II where he earned the American Defense Service Medal, Honorable Lapel Button, the European-African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with one Silver Service Star and three Bronze Service



Stars, and the World War II Victory Medal. He also served in Korea where he earned the United Nations Service Medal, Korean Service Medal with one Silver Service Star and one Bronze Service Star, the American Campaign Medal and a Meritorious Unit

Citation. He then spent a number of years as a heavy equipment instructor at Fort Lewis, Washington and at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri before leaving for South Vietnam. Grady began his tour of duty in Bien Hoa Province, South Vietnam on March 1, 1967 as a Heavy Construction Equipment Operator serving with A Company, 169th Engineering Battalion, 159th Engineering Group, 20th Engineering Brigade.

Grady took his own life on Christmas Eve of 1967. According to a posting by Dave Abshire, Sr. who served with Grady, "I remember Sarge very well. I was a young man 18 years old. Sarge was like a father figure to me at that time. Sometimes we would set and chat over a drink and he would tell me of some of the things he had done and seen in his time in the Army. He looked out for me and was an older friend. It was a bad Christmas that year for sure. "Sarge, if you have internet where you are and can read this, I still miss you. I didn't know things were that bad, some things you wouldn't talk about, and you were going through a tough time I know."

Grady Merrill Jordan is the oldest person to die in Vietnam that is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township. He lived 52 years 4 months and 29 days. He is listed under Ypsilanti. Grady is resting in the Fort Leonard Wood Post Cemetery in Pulaskey County, Missouri. His name also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC on Panel 32E Line 056.

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**First Lieutenant Dean Francis Spaulding, Jr.** was born on December 19, 1946, in Ypsilanti, Michigan to Mr. Dean F. Spaulding of Marquette, Michigan and Mrs. Estella Woodard of Clearwater, Michigan. Dean is a 1965 graduate of Manchester High School. He earned a scholarship to Rhode Island University in Kingston, Rhode Island. He entered the Army in January of 1967, was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, and attained First Lieutenant in November of 1968.



First Lieutenant Spaulding began his tour in Hau Nghia Province, South Vietnam on October 21, 1968 serving as a Field Artillery Unit Commander with B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 40th Artillery, 199th Infantry Brigade. Dean was killed on December 15, 1968 as a result of an explosive device.

Dean Francis Spaulding, Jr. is survived by his parents, two brothers and a sister. He lived 21 years, 11 months and 26 days. He is resting in the Largo Cemetery in Largo, Florida. Dean's name is listed on the Vietnam Memorial in Ypsilanti Township under Manchester. His name also appears on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC on Panel 36W Line 028.

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## Jocosity

By Ken Rogge

One day at the veterinarian's office where I take my cat, a man and the receptionist were verbally sparring. The man was being aggressive. After a few moments, a technician came to her co-worker's defense and said, . . . "Sir, do you know what happens to aggressive males in this office?"

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## Thanks to Packers

By John Kinzinger and Dave Draper

Thank you to all who came out to help with packaging for the troops this season. We had volunteers from VVA 310, VFW 423, Legion Post 46, Combat Veterans Association, DAR, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, a couple of churches, and others joined us on that day. It was a huge success. John Kinzinger and I were thinking we had more volunteers than we've had in a very long time. We packed 80 boxes with love and pride. A LOT of candy, socks, magazines, and personal hygiene items were packaged. You can click [HERE](#) to see the pictures. They will also be available on the VVA 310 website at <https://www.vva310.org/>.

Again, thank you from VVA 310.

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## House Bill 4602 -- 2023 Public Act 153

By Al (Fredo) Merritt

Four years ago, Lloyd Lee and I were sitting at the picnic table at our Memorial. We were discussing what we could do the further honor the Vietnam Veterans in Washtenaw County. We came up with the idea of renaming a section of I-94. We discussed several alternatives and decided the new name should be "Washtenaw County Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway." We didn't know how to go about it, so we started with Michigan Department of Transportation. They told us to go to the Washtenaw County Road Commission. They said they don't do that. Fortunately, Ypsilanti Township Supervisor Brenda Stumbo came to the rescue (again). She stopped by the Memorial one day when we were out there. When she heard the story, she told us that we need to contact the Michigan State Representative for the district where we want to rename the road. Since we wanted to rename the portion of the road near the Memorial, we reached out to Representative Ronnie Petterson, who sent his aide to meet with us at the Memorial.

Lloyd was not feeling well, so I gave the aide all of the needed information. After a couple weeks, I got a call from Representative Petterson. He said he was concerned that naming a road for the Memorial would create a problem later on for naming a road after all Vietnam Veterans. I explained how all Washtenaw County Vietnam Veterans would be honored by having the road named the way we suggested. He agreed and introduced HB 5572 in February 2021. The bill was unanimously approved without amendment in the House. The Senate Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure reported the bill out favorably without amendment; however, the bill did not come up for a vote before the full Senate.

Representative Peterson was termed out. It was an interesting time for a while because of redistricting; but, by the time the smoke cleared and the election was over, Representative Jimmie Wilson was our new State Representative. That was great for us. Jimmie had worked on our Memorial Grounds crew for a year by then, so I knew him and knew that he would pick up where we left off and do so with passion. I spoke with him about this as soon as I could, and he said he'd investigate it and get back to me.

Lloyd had gotten very ill by this time and was going to

go into hospice. I visited him as often as I could and kept him up to date on our progress. It was just a few months later that we lost Lloyd – a true hero – My Brother. My Best Friend. Until Valhalla.

On 18 May 2023, Representative Wilson introduced House Bill 4602. Jimmie asked me to put a small group together that would represent Vietnam Veterans in favor of the bill. The team I put together was President Vance McCrumb, Past President Stan Harrison, Secretary Jon Luker, and Memorial Maintenance Committee members Wendy Hibbitts and Eric Downie. The Transportation, Mobility and Infrastructure committee held a hearing on 20 June 2023, which we all attended, along with Lloyd Lee's son, Mike. The committee unanimously recommend the bill without amendments. A week later, the whole House unanimously approved the bill without amendment. It was then sent to the Senate. The Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Services held a hearing on 28 September. Most of the committee attended the hearing, and a few of us testified. The committee thanked us for our service, said they thought the bill would ultimately pass, and reported the bill out favorably with no amendments. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee of the Whole, which also reported the bill favorably with no amendments. I got word from Jimmie that the Senate unanimously voted to approve the bill on 10 October and that he would let us know when the governor would sign it.

I got a text from Jimmie saying that HB 4602 would be signed into law by the Governor on 19 October and that we were invited to attend the bill signing. We did attend the bill signing, met the Governor, and had our picture taken with the signed House Bill.

I would like to thank all those people who made this journey with me. Your support will forever honor my best friend Lloyd Lee and has made our dream come true.

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### **Of Interest to Veterans** **Annual Christmas Card Signing** *Submitted by John Kinzinger*

At our meeting on Thursday, December 14th, we will again be signing Christmas cards to be mailed to family members of those listed on our Vietnam Memorial. We recently received an early Christmas wish from a family member of a brother listed on our Memorial.

To the members of VVA 310,  
Enjoy the wonder of the season, with plenty of time to  
be refreshed in God's most precious gifts - the warmth  
of friends and family, and lasting love and peace.  
Merry Christmas  
For all your special work throughout the year. Linda  
and Gary Leonard

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## Upcoming Events

By Ann Dempsey Pereira

01 Jan: New Year's Day  
01 Jan: Navy Seals Birthday (1962)  
11 Jan: Monthly Meetings: AVVA, Noon, at Alpha Coney;  
VVA Board 1800 hrs; VVA General Mtg 1900 hrs  
12 Jan: VVA 310 Monthly Breakfast, 0900 hrs  
16 Jan: Merchandise Sales, 0800 hrs, VA Canteen  
27 Jan: Vietnam Cease Fire (1973)  
08 Feb: Monthly Meetings: AVVA, 1800 hrs; VVA Board  
1800 hrs; VVA General Mtg 1900 hrs  
09 Feb: VVA 310 Monthly Breakfast, 0900 hrs  
13 Feb: Merchandise Sales, 0800 hrs, VA Canteen  
19 Feb: Coast Guard Reserve Birthday (1943)  
19 Feb: President's Day  
\*\* Visit Veterans Radio online (click here: [veteransradio.net](http://veteransradio.net)) and make a contribution to help keep this vital program on the air.

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## Dispatch Recipients

VVA 310 award-winning newsletter reaches approximately 500 people each month with 100 mailed USPS, 50 hits off the website ([www.vva310.org](http://www.vva310.org)), and 350 emailed. With good stewardship and networking, the cost to print the *Dispatch* approximates \$1,250 per year.

If VVA 310 members or others receiving the *Dispatch* via USPS desire to assist with the printing cost, a suggested donation would be: one year at \$12.00, two years at \$22.00, and three years at \$30.00. Payment can be made payable to VVA 310 and mailed to P.O. Box 3221, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3221 indicating *Dispatch* on the memo line.

All other donations may be made payable to VVA 310 at

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## RECIPIENTS

James Alford ~ December 2025  
George Boone ~ February 2029  
Berryman Bourne ~ August 2026  
Cynthia Calhoun ~ April 2026  
Gary L. Couture ~ April 2024  
Sarah and Brent Gephart, Sr. ~ March 2031  
Corrine Gignac, in memory of her uncle Neil R. Gignac, CMSAF ~ April 2024  
Stan Harrison to honor Russ Michalke ~ March 2026  
Ralph Henry ~ November 2026  
Steve and Shirley Hitte ~ June 2024  
Ray Hunter ~ December 2032  
Darlene Imus ~ January 2027  
Jane and John Kinzinger ~ June 2024  
Mary Kate Kirkpatrick ~ December 2023  
Linda Lamey-Leonard, in memory of Lavern Lamey ~ July 2024

This KIA person is listed on our Memorial Wall.  
Lloyd Lee ~ March 2031  
David Marshall ~ June 2024  
Sandy Martinez ~ November 2024  
Del Mayes ~ March 2025  
Alfred (Fredo) Merritt ~ March 2026  
Gwen Park Olds in honor of John C. Park, Vietnam Vet ~ September 2033  
Ronald Oliver ~ August 2027  
Paulo and Ann Dempsey Pereira ~ October 2024  
George Perrault ~ October 2025  
Bruce Ross ~ March 2028  
Glenn Sakcriska ~ November 2026  
Jim Sharp ~ April 2031  
John C. Shook ~ July 2028  
Larry St. Antoine ~ September 2025  
Elizabeth Wong ~ September 2026  
Hank Woods, in memory of Past President Paul S. Dumsch ~ September 2027

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## Thank You From the Wall

By George Perrault

At first, there was no place for us to go until someone put up that Black Granite Wall. Now, every day and night, my Brothers and my Sisters wait to see the many people from places afar file in front of this Wall. Many stop briefly; many for hours; and some come on



a regular basis. It was hard at first—not that it's gotten any easier—but it seems that many of the attitudes toward that war that we were involved in have changed. I can only pray that

the ones on the other side have learned something, and more Walls as this one needn't be built. Several members of my unit—and others I did not recognize—have called me to the Wall by touching my name engraved upon it. Tears aren't necessary but are hard to hold back. "Don't feel guilty for not being with me, my Brothers," I whispered. "This was my destiny, as it is yours to be on that side of the Wall. Touch the Wall, my Brothers, so that we can share in the memories that we had. I have learned to put the bad memories aside and remember only the pleasant times we had together. Tell our other Brothers out there to come and visit me—not to say Good Bye, but to say Hello and be together again, even for a short time, and to ease that pain of loss that we all share."

Today, a loving call comes from the Wall. As I approach it, I see an elderly lady. It's Momma! As much as I have looked forward to this day, I also have regretted it because I didn't know what reaction I would have. Next to her, I suddenly see my wife, and immediately think how hard it must have been for her to come to this place, and my mind floods with the pleasant memories of 40 years past. There's a young man in a military uniform standing with his arms around her. . . . My God! . . . It has to be my son. Look at him trying to be the man without a tear in his eyes! I yearn to tell him how proud I am, seeing him standing tall, straight, and proud in his uniform.

Momma comes closer and touches the Wall. I feel

the gentle touch I had not felt in so many years. Dad has crossed to this side of the Wall—and through our touch, I convey to her that Dad is doing fine and is no longer feeling pain. I see my wife's courage building as she sees Momma touch the Wall. She approaches and lays her hand on my waiting hand. All the emotions, feelings, and memories of four decades past flash between our touch. I tell her that it's all right. "Carry on with your life, and don't worry about me," I tell her. As I look into her eyes, I see she understands me. A big burden has been lifted from her. They lay flowers and memories from my past: my lucky charm, sent to her by my CO; a worn teddy bear that I can barely remember; and medals I had earned and were presented to my wife. One of them is the Combat Infantry Badge, which I am very proud of. I notice my son is also wearing this medal. I had earned mine in the jungles of Vietnam, and he earned his in the deserts of Iraq.

They are now preparing to leave. I take a mental picture of them together. I don't know when I will see them again. I wouldn't blame them if they were not to return, and I can only thank them that I was not forgotten. My wife and Momma come near the Wall for one final touch. Many years of indecision, fear, and sorrow are let go. As they turn to leave, my tears that had not flowed for so many years form, as if dew drops, on the other side of the Wall. They slowly move away with only a glance over their shoulder. My son suddenly stops and returns. He stands straight in front of me and snaps a salute. He puts his hand upon the Wall and touches my tears that had formed on the face of the Wall. I can tell he senses the pride and the love I have for him. He falls to his knees; tears flow from his eyes as I reassure him that it's all right and that his tears do not make him any less of a man. As he moves back, wiping the tears from his eyes, he silently mouths "God Bless you, Dad." "God Bless, YOU, Son," I respond. "We WILL meet someday, but in the meanwhile, go on your way. There is no hurry. There is no hurry at all." As I see them walk off in the distance, I yell out to THEM and EVERYONE there today, as loud as I can: "THANKS FOR REMEMBERING." As others on this side of the Wall join in, I notice that the US Flag, which so proudly flies in front of us every day, is flapping in the wind and standing proudly straight. THANK YOU ALL FOR REMEMBERING!

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Website: [vva310.org](http://vva310.org)  
Email: [membership@vva310.org](mailto:membership@vva310.org)  
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VVA 310 Chapter Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 3221  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3221

Contact Us: Please direct any  
communication to President and  
Webmaster "Vance McCrumb"  
<[dogman2@reagan.com](mailto:dogman2@reagan.com)>.

Vietnam Veterans of America  
Charles S. Kettles Chapter 310  
P.O. Box 3221  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3221  
Please forward. Thank you!